

Decision No. R23-0874-I

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

PROCEEDING NO. 23M-0464EG

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMISSION'S IMPLEMENTATION OF ASPECTS OF SENATE BILL 23-291 INCLUDING ITS CONSIDERATION OF CUSTOMER CONNECTIONS TO AND DISCONNECTIONS FROM INVESTOR-OWNED ELECTRIC AND GAS UTILITY SYSTEMS AND THE STUDY OF POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION AND DISTRIBUTED ENERGY RESOURCES.

**INTERIM DECISION OF HEARING COMMISSIONER
MEGAN M. GILMAN
SCHEDULING WORKSHOPS
ON FEBRUARY 5, 2024 AND FEBRUARY 12, 2024**

Mailed Date: December 29, 2023

I. STATEMENT

1. By Decision No. C23-0627, issued September 18, 2023, the Commission opened this Proceeding to implement certain provisions in Senate Bill 23-291 related to customer connections to and disconnections from investor-owned electric and gas utility systems and designated Commissioner Megan M. Gilman as Hearing Commissioner pursuant to § 40-6-101(2), C.R.S.

2. In accordance with Decision No. R23-0636-I, issued September 20, 2023, the Hearing Commissioner conducted a public comment hearing on October 4, 2023 to receive accounts from prospective and existing utility customers, builders and housing developers, local government officials, and utility representatives regarding electric utility policies and practices related to requests for new or upgraded electric service, including the costs and timing of system upgrades for necessary system interconnection.

3. By this Decision, the Hearing Commissioner schedules two workshops to further examine issues raised at the October 4, 2023 public comment hearing related to requests for new service or service upgrades within the electric service area of Public Service Company of Colorado (Public Service) that does business as Xcel Energy. The first workshop will be conducted on Monday, February 5, 2024, with a focus on potential ways to improve the service request process and communications used by Public Service throughout its electric service area. This workshop is intended to involve interested representatives from developers, builders, municipalities, and others interested in the interconnection process for new loads, as well as representatives from Public Service. The second workshop will be conducted on Monday, February 12, 2024, during which the Hearing Commissioner will examine the capacity constraints on the utility's electric system that are presenting issues to customers, builders, and developers seeking new service or service upgrades with representatives from Public Service familiar with the system constraints and planning.

II. FINDINGS, AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Workshop on Service Request Improvements (February 5, 2024)

4. At the October 4, 2023 public comment hearing, approximately 20 attendees shared information on their experiences when seeking new or upgraded electric service from Public Service. For example, certain affordable housing developers working on projects in the Denver metro area relayed comments about their projects being jeopardized due to either years of delay or unanticipated requirements to pay for significant upgrades to Public Service's system. These comments further revealed problems in the process flow, in particular, in communicating with project teams about their plans and needs during the several years of lead up to anticipated projects. In several cases, project teams expressed a need to spend significant time and money on

project planning before being able to receive reliable information about the timing and costs to interconnect their new loads to the Public Service system.

5. The Hearing Commissioner seeks to examine, in an interactive workshop setting, potential improvements to Public Service's current processes for service requests to align these processes with the interests of the developers and projects being planned. This workshop will concentrate on communications and information flows while a project is in planning stages. The goal of the workshop is to identify more streamlined and more predictable communication and tracking processes for new developments or upgrades. (This initial workshop is not intended to cover the cost allocations of system upgrades, which will likely be the topic of a separate workshop.) Representatives from developers, builders, municipalities, and others interested in the interconnection process for new loads, as well as representatives from Public Service, are encouraged to attend to enable a fulsome dialogue about the issues faced in this interconnection process, examples of processes in other utilities, and potential improvements to the process and communications.

6. The workshop scheduled for the afternoon of February 5, 2024, will be conducted using the web platform Zoom. Those interested in participating in the workshop must register in advance using the link posted on the Commission's calendar of events for the date and time of the hearing at: <https://puc.colorado.gov/puccalendar>. Registrants will receive an email with the link, meeting ID code, passcode, and call-in information to join the Zoom session.

7. This workshop is scheduled to commence at 1:00 p.m. and will conclude no later than 5:00 p.m.

8. Consistent with Commission practice, the workshop will be webcast on the Commission's website. Persons wishing to observe, but not participate in the workshop may do so by observing the webcast on the PUC YouTube Channel at puc.colorado.gov/webcasts.

B. Workshop on Capacity Constraints (February 12, 2024)

9. The October 4, 2023 public comment hearing included accounts from several project teams relaying significant issues with the Public Service system being able to host their new or expanded loads, especially in certain locations in the Denver Metro area. In some cases, these needed system upgrades may be leading to years long delays for new projects, including several new affordable housing developments, or may be causing substantial, unexpected costs to the project teams. It is not clear when these constraints were identified by Public Service or the urgency or methods with which they have been working to solve them.

10. The goal of a second interactive workshop is to understand: (1) the capacity constraints in the Denver metro area that are causing the delays in service requests and the significant upgrade costs, (2) the factors contributing to these constraints, and (3) how the emergence of such capacity constraints can be identified sooner, especially in the context of existing Distribution System Planning processes. Accordingly, this second workshop will be conducted by the Hearing Commissioner with knowledgeable representatives from Public Service familiar with the system constraints and planning.

11. The workshop scheduled for the afternoon of February 12, 2024, will be conducted using the web platform Zoom. Representatives of Public Service will be provided by email the link, meeting ID code, passcode, and call-in information to join the Zoom session.

12. This workshop is scheduled to commence at 1:00 p.m. and will conclude no later than 5:00 p.m.

13. Consistent with Commission practice, the workshop will be webcast on the Commission's website. Persons wishing to observe, but not participate in the workshop may do so by observing the webcast on the PUC YouTube Channel at puc.colorado.gov/webcasts.

C. Additional Public Comment

14. Interested persons are encouraged to submit written comments through either the Commission's Electronic Filing System at <https://www.dora.state.co.us/pls/efi/EFI.homepage> in this Proceeding, or the Commission's website at <https://puc.colorado.gov/> by clicking on the "FILE A COMMENT OR COMPLAINT" link at the bottom of the page. Anyone using the latter option should ensure that their comments include this Proceeding number.

15. Oral comments can be provided by leaving a voice mail message at (303) 869-3490. Voice mail public comments will be placed in the record of this Proceeding and should include a reference to this Proceeding number.

III. ORDER

A. It Is Ordered That:

1. Consistent with the discussion above, a workshop addressing potential ways to improve the service request process used by Public Service Company of Colorado (Public Service) throughout its electric service area is scheduled as follows:

DATE: February 5, 2024

TIMES: 1:00 p.m., continuing until concluded, but no later than 5:00 p.m.

PLACE: By video conference or telephone using the Zoom web conferencing platform at a link emailed to all those who register to participate in the workshop.

2. All those who wish to participate in the February 5, 2024 workshop must register by clicking on the link available on the Commission's calendar of events on its website for the date and time(s) of the hearing at puc.colorado.gov/puccalendar.

3. Those wishing to observe but not participate in the above February 5, 2024 workshop may do so by observing the Commission's webcast of the workshop on the PUC YouTube Channel at: puc.colorado.gov/webcasts.

4. Consistent with the discussion above, a workshop addressing capacity constraints on Public Service's electric system affecting new service or service upgrades is scheduled as follows:

DATE: February 12, 2024

TIMES: 1:00 p.m., continuing until concluded, but no later than 5:00 p.m.

PLACE: By video conference or telephone using the Zoom web conferencing platform.

5. Representatives of Public Service will be provided an email with the link, meeting ID code, passcode, and call-in information to join the Zoom session. All members of the public may observe the Commission's webcast of the workshop on the PUC YouTube Channel at: puc.colorado.gov/webcasts.

6. Members of the public who wish to provide written or oral comments may do so by following the instructions provided above in this Decision.

7. This Decision is effective upon its Mailed Date.

(S E A L)



THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

MEGAN M. GILMAN

Hearing Commissioner

ATTEST: A TRUE COPY

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca E. White".

Rebecca E. White,
Director